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THE CULTURE HISTORY OF THE LAU ISLANDS, FIJI[1]

By LAURA THOMPSON

THE Lau Islands form the eastern border of Fiji. Lakemba in the center of the Lau group was formerly an independent chiefdom, holding all the central and southern islands in tributary relationship. The southern islands, partly of volcanic formation,[2] partly of coral limestone,[3] comprised the chiefdom's rich hinterland. Most of them lack garden land but they produce raw materials used in making important articles of exchange. Outstanding are the hardwoods[4] used for large sailing canoes. Southern Lau supplied all Fiji and also Tonga with these vessels. The type of paper mulberry[5] used for the best barkcloth and pandanus[6] used for the finest mats are also found here, and coconut of excellent quality for oil grows on all the southern islands. Based on these resources, specialized crafts have developed on the islands, which produce the finest canoes, barkcloth, and mats in Fiji. These commodities were traded with Tonga and also collected regularly as tribute to the high chief of Lakemba, who distributed part of them to other chiefdoms in Fiji through a system of gift exchange.

Although of great importance in native economy, the southern islands have offered little to attract the white man on account of their lack of fertile soil

[1] The following study is a translation of a lecture delivered to the Ethnological Colloquium of the University of Berlin in March, 1937. In its original form this has appeared in Archiv für Anthropologie, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1937. It is part of the results of nine months field work in Fiji under a Yale University-Bishop Museum fellowship. A description of the ethnographic results of the field trip are being published as a Bishop Museum bulletin. The spelling of native words follows David Hazelwood, *A Feejeean and English Dictionary* (Vewa, Fiji, 1850). Place names follow British Admiralty charts.

I express sincere appreciation to Bernhard J. Tüting for assistance in the field and particularly for his work on the native religion.

[2] Mothe and Komo Islands.

[3] Kambara (which has a volcanic outcrop), Namuka, Oneate, Fulanga, and Ongea Islands. (Also Ono and Vatoa, the southernmost islands, which are not included in this study.)

[4] Especially vesi. called greenheart of India (*Intsia bijuga* [Colebr.] Ktze.), also mbau (probably *Pittorporum* Brackenridge).

[5] Masi, masi ntchina, and ndrauthoka, forms of the paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera* Vent.). The paper mulberry is found on every island but the best quality grows only on Namuka.

[6] On Fulanga, Ongea, and Wangava.

[pp 1-180 not processed]

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000 121 fertile soil. Here a relatively large amount of the old life survives. Hence southern Lau provides a good field for the ethnographer interested in understanding a functioning culture of Fiji in its historic background.

127 Like other South Sea peoples, the Lauans lack written records. Only a few documents, written by early navigators, missionaries, and government officials[7] are available for this region. Besides these, in reconstructing the history I have relied chiefly on internal evidence such as genealogies,[8] folklore, ceremonies, social structure, property rights, and technology. [172] Archaeological data[9] and selected statements of reliable native informants have been used as supplementary evidence.

The history of the Lau Islands may be divided into five periods: (1) the early period; (2) the period of cultural adaptation following the arrival of immigrants from the west (about ten generations ago); (3) the Tongan period (reaching its height in the middle of the nineteenth century); (4) the European period (beginning about 1835); (5) the period of readjustment.

PERIOD 1

174 The earliest known inhabitants of the Lau Islands are called kai vanua, "people of the land."[10] They had a simple social organization. They lived in scattered hamlets, called tokatoka, usually located near garden lands or in clearings in the bush.[11] Each hamlet consisted of a sib[12] led by a

[7] There is also an account of the culture on Lakemba Island twenty years ago by A. M. Hocart (*The Lau islands, Fiji*, Bulletin, Bishop Museum, No. 62, Honolulu, 1929).

[8] Genealogies of thirty-nine sibs, extending from five to ten generations, were recorded.

[9] To check the culture history, archaeological sites (including hamlet and village sites, hill fortresses, burial and fortified caves, gaming grounds, cemeteries, and temple sites) were examined on Kambara, Wangava, Namuka, Mothe, Fulanga, and Ongea. No excavating was done.

[10] Descendants of these early inhabitants are still called kai vanua. They have retained their sib units and sib dieties, and form one of the two main social divisions into which the Lauans are grouped. The descendants of the immigrants of Period 2 form the other division. This two-fold division has been obscured on many islands, especially on Lakemba and Mothe, due to Tongan and European influences, and on Namuka and Komo where the early population was destroyed and the islands were repopulated by colonists chiefly from Kambara and Wangava. It was worked out on Kambara by means of the sib genealogies, totems, dieties, holy places, hamlet sites, sketch maps of each village, legends, ceremonies, and the statements of old informants. Archaeological excavations should yield further information concerning Period 1.

[11] The natives know which hamlet sites belonged to the land people; for example, Vakawangga, Nawi, old Lomatchi, and Korokoroilulu on Kambara, and Nggilo, Tawali, and Toka on Fulanga.

[12] Each tokatoka was apparently composed of one sib. The tokatoka still retain their local unity though they are now consolidated into coast villages. They are called matanggali (sibs) and are divided into subsibs, called mbatchi ni lovo. The subsibs are composed of vuvale (households). Many sibs today are called by the place names of their old tokatoka.

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headman and from these groups have descended the patrilineal sibs of the yavusa vanua (land group) in Lau today. Political power was in the hands of the old men.[13] The land people had little interest in pedigrees[14] and chieftainship was absent. Their traditions contain no reference to warfare and there was apparently little rivalry between groups or individuals.

The land people believed in a great spiritual being or mana-giver, the kalou.[15] Each hamlet had also its own spiritual being, called kalou vu. The names of most of these hamlet dieties have been lost but those recorded are spirits rather than ghosts.[16] The dieties were worshipped by "priests"[17] in sacred places[18] such as caves. They were propitiated with offerings in times of trouble, such as hurricane or drought.[19] The land people had first fruits' and probably boys' initiation[20] rites. Their ceremonies centered in their religious life.

The early inhabitants of each island believed that they originated locally from some natural object such as a tree or an animal which was their vu (forefather). For instance, the people of Kambara believed that they originated from the ngingia tree.[21] There is only one ngingia tree on Kambara.[22] It is located near the beach north of Undu village, which is com-

[13] The title turanga which (according to A. M. Hocart, Man, No. 80, 1913) formerly meant "old man" and now means "noble, senior, father, old man," may have been applied to these old men. A form of gerontocracy is found in parts of Viti Levu.

[14] The land people remember not more than five generations of their sib genealogies.

[15] Information concerning the great kalou was derived from Moto of Undu. He was the oldest inhabitant on Kambara and a member of the land group. He says he was born shortly after Christianity was introduced to the island.

[16] The following kalou vu of the land people were obtained from informants of this group: Mberawalaki (Nangara sib, Kambara), Tutumatua (Matasoata sib, Kambara), Iri Mbuli (Tonganiuthi sib, Kambara), Nainggilo (Nggilo sib, Fulanga), Rongoua (Nasava sib, Fulanga). Informants say that the above kalou vu are spirits, not ghosts.

[17] The "priest" was a sort of possessional shaman. Organized priesthood was apparently absent.

[18] Called na sava like Nggara Kalou, a sacred cave on Kambara, and Kalou, a sacred stone at Toka, Fulanga. I do not know whether the land people had mbure kalou (houses of the gods; see footnote 43) in Period 1, but they had them when the missionaries came, according to informants and to the archaeology.

[19] According to native informants of the land people.

[20] According to Moto, the land people had a secret society called Nanga. Lorimer Fison (*The Nanga, or Sacred Stone Enclosures of Wainimala, Fiji*, Journal, Royal Anthropological Institute, Vol. 14, pp. 14–30, 1884) describes the Nanga of western Viti Levu as a secret society consisting of three age groups, into which all the males of the community were initiated. The purpose of the society was the induction of the men into full tribal membership. The rites took place in a sacred rectangular enclosure, and consisted of offerings to ancestral spirits, circumcision, ordeals, dancing, license, and the distribution of wealth. In 1884 the Nanga ceremonies were no longer performed. Such enclosures were not seen in Lau.

[21] Informant, Moto of Undu. [22] According to native informants.

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174 posed of sibs descending from the early inhabitants of the island. Men of Undu still offer food and kava here in times of distress. According to the natives, the ceremony was last performed in 1929 when a severe drought threatened the food supply on the island. The wanggawangga ni vu (shrine of the forefather) of Kambara is the red shark, called by the title tui natakala or simply ratu. The red shark is the guardian of the land people, and it is still strictly tabu for a descendant of this group to kill, harm, or eat the red shark, or to defend himself against it. The shark is still propitiated with offerings on the beach or on a canoe at sea. Its appearance is considered to be a good omen. The land people of Fulanga believed that they originated from a hen, those of Mothe from an ivi[22] tree, and those of Namuka from a white dog.

The early inhabitants believed in a local abode of the soul after death. The traditional abode of the ghosts of the Kambara land people is Nggara Levu (great cave),[24] a burial cave located near the ngingia tree. The natives say that when a Kambara man died his soul went with a hissing sound to this cave. There is a story that from Nggara Levu the soul went to a high, roof-shaped rock on the reef of the island. The dead of the land people were buried in caves.

The early inhabitants subsisted chiefly by fishing and collecting tubers, fruits, and nuts from the bush.[25] Gardens were much smaller than they are today. Manioc[26] and sweet potato,[27] the main garden products today,[28] found their way into Lau during historic times.

Little definite information was obtained about the technology of the early inhabitants. Probably they lived in caves[29] and in small huts. We found no evidence of pottery or the tapa craft before Period 2.

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[22] *Inocarpus edulis*, Forst.

[24] Also called Nggara-ni-mate (cave of the dead).

[25] On Kambara the chief food besides fish was the wangiri (unidentified) nut, which was preserved by fermentation in salt water. Other bush foods were probably the ivi (*Inocarpus edulis* Forst.), ndawa (*Pometia pinnata* Forst.), aumitha (*Malaisia scandens* Lour. Pl.), mbawaki (unidentified), and wild yam. On Fulanga the chief food was yambia (*Tacca pinnatifida* Forst.).

[26] Forms of the cultivated manihot. [27] *Ipomoea batatas*.

[28] Uvi (yam, *Dioscorea sp.*) and ndalo (taro, *Colocasia antiquorum* Schott) do not grow well on the southern islands. We do not know whether the land people of the fertile volcanic islands (where these tubers grow today) raised them in Period 1, but the number of varieties of each in Lau indicate that the plants have not been introduced recently. (See C. H. Wright, *A List of Fijian Plant Names*, Bulletin, Department of Agriculture, Fiji, No. 10, Suva, 1918.) Kawai (sweet yam, a form of *Dioscorea sp.*), was probably cultivated.

[29] According to informants. We found adz blades, fire holes, shell heaps, potsherds, house-posts, and canoe hulls in caves which they said had been inhabited.

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PERIOD 2

About ten generations ago, according to the genealogies of high ranking sibs, a group of warrior immigrants arrived in Lau. The folklore says that these people came from Nakauvandra in northeast Viti Levu, the largest island of the Fiji group. Nakauvandra is the traditional home of Ndengei,[20] the great ancestral god of Fiji. The immigrants worshipped Ndengei as their first forefather. They were led by the warrior hero, Ndaunisai, who came with his brothers in two large double canoes. Ndaunisai landed on Kambara Island. From here the immigrants spread through southern and central Lau and established themselves as the dominant social group. Although the newcomers were warriors, settlement was not necessarily by force. They were accepted as bringing rarama (light) to the inhabitants who had been living in mbutombuto (darkness).[21]

Upon the basic sib unit of the early inhabitants, the immigrants imposed a complicated system of rank, by which every sib stood in definite relationship to every other sib. The ranking system was founded mainly on seniority in relationship to the leader, Ndaunisai, and on success in warfare. Hence sib genealogies were important. Rank was expressed in hereditary sib titles[22] depending on an historical division of sibs. Sibs descended from the immigrants formed the yavusa turanga (chief group). Sibs descended from the early inhabitants formed the yavusa vanua (land group).

The highest rank was held by the high chief, Tui Naiau,[23] who was directly descended in the first born line from the most powerful immigrant, Ndaunisai. The high chief was sacred. His person was protected by many tabus and to break one of these meant death. He was surrounded by strict etiquette and elaborate ceremonial. The head of the chief, his headrest, and his comb were tabu. The head of the pig and the sea turtle were reserved for him. He was addressed by a special phraseology.[24] His birth, circumcision, betrothal, marriage, and death were celebrated by all his

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[20] For further information concerning Ndengei see: Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States' Exploring Expedition, 1838–1842* (Philadelphia, 1845), Vol. 3, p. 83; A. B. Brewster *The Hill Tribes of Fiji* (London, 1922), pp. 81–82, 85.

[21] According to informants.

[22] Such as mata ni vanua (eye or face of the land), the chief's herald; ndau ni nggoli (master fisherman); vaka vanua (chief of crops). Sib titles are held by the sib headman.

[23] For a legend concerning the first Tui Naiau see: G. M. Hennings, *The Murder of the First Tui Naiau* (Transactions, Fijian Society, 1917), pp. 33–37.

[24] This phraseology was in the Mbauan dialect. See Thomas Williams and J. Calvert, *Fiji and the Fijians* (London, 1858), Vol. 1, pp. 37–38.

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174 people with ceremonial presentations of tribute, formal dances,[35] and kava[36] drinking customs with carefully prescribed rituals and precedence.[37] He had one chief wife and many secondary wives.[38] At his death some of these were strangled.[39] The chiefly ceremonial pattern was duplicated less ostentatiously for other members of the group, depending on rank and wealth.

The ranking system was interrelated with a hierarchy of sib ancestor gods called kalou vu. At the top of the hierarchy stood Ndaunisai and his ancestors. The position of each god was determined by his mana, expressed by success in warfare while on earth and by success of his living descendants. In other words, his rank was determined by his pre-mortem and post-mortem prestige.

The stress on rank and its supplement in ancestor worship threw the emphasis in religion from the spiritual "high god" concept of the early inhabitants to the sib ancestor gods of the newcomers.[40] However, although the newcomers worshipped their ancestral gods as sib dieties, the descendants of the early inhabitants retained their sib gods as well as their sib units.

The ancestor god of each sib was embodied in a species of animal or plant which was sacred to the sib. Although much knowledge of sib totems has been lost, at least half of the thirty-seven sibs studied possessed three totems: a species of fish, a species of bird, and a species of tree. The totems were propitiated with ceremonial offerings of food and kava. Each species had a title and its generic name was tabu to members of other sibs in the presence of the owners. The Vuanikathu sib on Kambara, which traces its genealogy ten generations directly to Ndaunisai, owns the mavinda[41] tree, the ongo fish, and the kaisevou bird.[42] Even today the mavinda trees of

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[35] Called meke, especially war dances for men and sitting dances for women.

[36] Yanggona (*Piper methysticum* Forst.).

[37] According to the so called Fijian custom, which is characterized by great formality, hand clapping, and kava meke singing. The old men told Williams (*op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 141) that the true Fijian mode was characterized by the grating of the root on a piece of fine coral.

[38] Williams (*op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 32–33) states that the chief had from ten to fifty or one hundred wives.

[39] As described by informants, by Wilkes (*op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 98–100), and by Williams (*op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 189, 200–201).

[40] The interest of the early population, expressed in their mystical outlook on life and religious ritual, was focused on the inner content of life, while that of the immigrants, expressed in the rank system, ancestor worship, and social ceremonial, was focused on outer form. Even today the land people are less restricted in daily life by formalities and jealousy than the chief group. They seem to be more modest and liberal and to have more sense of humor than members of the chief group. [41] *Erythrospermum polyandrum* Oliver.

[42] Information concerning the Vuanikathu sib totems was obtained from the sib headman. It is tabu for other members of the sib to discuss them.

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the island are cared for by the sib and their fragrant flowers may not be picked. It is tabu for members of the sib to catch or eat the ongo fish. Kaisevou birds, caught by sib members, are rubbed with perfumed oil and released. The ancestor god and his totems were propitiated for mana in order to enhance the social prestige of the sib, the highest social value of the immigrants. They were worshipped by hereditary priests in small temples called mbure kalou.[42] Frequently the priests used their power to enhance the power of the chiefs.[44]

When a man from the immigrant group died, his soul went to Nai Thimbathimba, a jumping-off place on or near each island. Nai Thimbathimba usually faced the west or northwest. In this direction lies Nai Thombothombo, the land of souls, located on the Mbua coast, Vanua Levu, one of the two large islands of Fiji. From Nai Thimbathimba the soul was ferried by canoe to Nai Thombothombo. Members of the yavusa turanga (chief group) today are not aware that the early inhabitants had a local abode of the dead. They believe that the land people also go after death to Nai Thombothombo, but whereas ghosts of the chief group board a hardwood or chiefly canoe, those of the land group journey by a softwood or inferior one into eternity.[45]

The immigrants married women of the land people[46] and since these

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[42] House of the god. According to statements and drawings in historical sources, to archaeological sites, and to native informants, the mbure kalou in Lau consisted of a small, oval or rectangular building with a disproportionately high, thatched, gabled roof. The building was raised on a foundation mound, usually oval or round. Fragant plants grew around it and still grow on the old sites, and ceremonial and other weapons were kept in it. See Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 86; J. E. Erskine, *Journal of a Cruise among the Islands of the Western Pacific* (London, 1853), p. 168; Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 215, 222–23.

[44] On account of his direct contact with the ancestor gods, the priest had considerable power. He presented offerings from the people to the gods before a raid and in times of trouble. He was possessed by the kalou vu. This information was obtained from many informants and checked by the sources. See Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 86–90, 209; Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 223–37; Transactions, Fijian Society, 1925–26, p. 30.

[45] This is a general belief in Lau. It is also found in Fiji proper. The belief that souls of the departed go to Nai Thombothombo on Vanua Levu was reported in the nineteenth century from other parts of Fiji, and these reports state that from here the soul was believed to go to Nakauvandra, the abode of Ndengei, the great ancestor god in northeast Viti Levu (Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 85; Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 225). It is probable that this belief of a return of the soul to Nakauvandra, the land of origin, also formerly existed among the immigrants of Lau.

[46] Today the two groups are mixed physically. However, since the immigrants founded their own sibs and the land people kept theirs, the two groups have maintained their identity through patrilineal descent. Moreover, in spite of the intermarriage between them, the natives claim to be able to see to which group a man belongs by his bearing, manners, and physical

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174 brought land as dowry,[47] the immigrants also became land holders. During the last two generations land has not been transferred from sib to sib.[48] Cross-cousin marriage[49] is the rule. Sibs of the land people still own most of the land, including the larger part of the fertile patches.[50] They take more interest in their gardens than the immigrants, but the latter are by far the better sailors and are also expert fish spearers.

Although fishing, collecting, and gardening[51] continued to furnish the basis for subsistence, production was organized under the immigrants and industry developed a high degree of skill. The chiefs stimulated craftsmanship by attaching specialists, particularly carpenters[52] and fishermen, to their courts and extracting heavy tribute in the form of trade articles from their subjects. Lau became known in Tonga and Fiji for the quality of her materials and workmanship.[53] A lively interisland trade grew up between the coral limestone islands and those of volcanic formation. The fertile volcanic islands exchanged food for manufactured articles such as canoes, woodwork, tapa, and mats from the infertile islands, since the former lacked the natural resources and specialized skills necessary for these crafts.

In the latter part of Period 2 the Levuka people,[54] a group of sailors and potters, were expelled from Mbau. Some of them fled to Levuka, Lakemba, which became a pottery-making center. The Levuka women traveled through the southern islands and made pots wherever they could find potter's clay[55] and a market. They used the lump technic.[56]

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features (see footnote 81). Most villages today are composed of sibs from both groups but tend to be predominantly (80–20%) either one or the other. A few villages are composed of sibs from the land group only. No villages composed entirely of sibs from the chief group were found.

[47] The land was called sovisovi ni ndraundrau (place to collect leaves), for the women are responsible for collecting edible green leaves daily.

[48] These statements were checked by the genealogies and the distribution of garden land. [49] In the classificatory sense. [50] Checked by plans of garden land.

[51] A digging stick was used. Garden tools are described by Williams (Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 63–64). [52] See footnote 89.

[53] Extracts from Cook (p. 115), Wilson (p. 210), and Bellinghausen (pp. 231–32) in G. C. Henderson, *The Discoverers of the Fiji Islands* (London, 1933).

[54] For information concerning the Levuka group see: Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 61, 63, 175; Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 133–34; Transactions, Fijian Society, 1925, p. 24; Hocart, *op. cit.*, 1929, pp. 18–19. [55] I.e. on Kambara and Oneate.

[56] According to Levuka women who have witnessed the process. The art is now lost. Formerly cooking was done by the men, either by steaming in the earth oven, by roasting, or by stone boiling. After the introduction of pottery the women took over a share of the cooking. Daily the men secured, prepared, and steamed the garden produce while the women gathered, prepared, and boiled the fish, jungle greens, and coconut cream mixture, which is part of the daily diet. Food was frequently cooked twice a day in pots instead of once in the earth oven. (See Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 139.)

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Rivalry between the high ranking social groups led to strife, and fortifications were built on every island.[57] Natural defences, situated on the edge of coral limestone plateaux or at the summit of volcanic hills, were reinforced by stone walls or by a series of ramparts of earth, surmounted in times of war by fences of reeds and often by a moat. Inside the walls were houses used only in times of danger by the inhabitants of neighboring hamlets. Clubs, spears, bows, and slings were the principal weapons.[58]

Gradually the small, poor islands became dependent upon the larger ones.[59] There arose small chiefdoms like Kambara, which held Namuka, Komo, Wangava, Marambo, and perhaps at one time Fulanga, in tributary relationship. Finally Kambara was absorbed by Lakemba, which became the most powerful chiefdom in Lau.[60]

PERIODS 3 AND 4

The periods of Tongan and European influence, which overlap historically, will be discussed in one section because it is impossible to understand one without the other.

In the early nineteenth century European traders began to visit the main islands of the Fiji group, chiefly to collect sandalwood and bêche-de-mer.[61] At this time there were a number of hostile, independent chiefdoms like Lakemba in Fiji. The most powerful were Mbau and Rewa in southeastern Viti Levu, and Somosomo, Mathuata, and Mbua in east, north and west Vanua Levu respectively. Perhaps the most far-reaching effect of early contact with western civilization was the introduction of firearms

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[57] The following fortresses were examined: on Kambara—Nakorovusa, Naisevou, Nakoroyangai, Nakaka, Nakoro, Matai-Undu, Thaukenaloa; on Wangava—Ndengei, Korombalavu, Nambakua; on Mothe—Ndelaimakotu, Ndelaimothe; on Fulanga—Nauluvatu, Tchinambua.

[58] For the fortifications of the chief's village on Lakemba see Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 168. For general information concerning fortifications and arms see: Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 78–81; Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 43–59, 76; extracts from Cook (p. 108), Bligh (pp. 163–64), and Wilson (p. 210) in Henderson, *op. cit.*

[59] There were three grades of dependency between groups: mbatchi, nggali, and kaisi. The mbatchi included those groups which were compelled to respond when the chief called for help in warfare; the nggali included conquered groups from whom the chief extracted regular tribute in food and industrial produce; and the kaisi included defeated groups reduced to slavery.

[60] The tributary relationships in southern Lau cannot be reconstructed in detail with the available evidence until the islands came under the supremacy of Lakemba.

[61] Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 95; Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 235; Berthold Seemann, *Viti, an Account of a Government Mission to the Vitian or Fijian Islands in the Years 1860–61* (London, 1862), p. 405; *Journal of William Lockerby, 1808–09* (Hakluyt Society, Ser. 2, No. 52, 1925), p. ix.

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175 and western military tactics into Fiji.[62] This intensified the struggle between the leading chiefdoms and led to the centralization of political power.[63] Larger war forces were used, and cannibalism and human sacrifice increased. Thus it was possible for the chiefdom of Mbau to become dominant in Fiji in the first half of the century.[64]

The centralization of power had another important result. It prepared the way for the penetration of the Tongans into Fiji. Contact of the Fiji islands with Tonga[65] began before the eighteenth century. The missionary Williams[66] states that the recollection of the first voyage from Tonga was lost more than a hundred years before his time. Gradually economic exchange grew up between Tonga and Fiji. It was initiated and carried on by the Tongans,[67] mainly on account of the hardwood of southern Lau. They remained months and even years in Lau while they built large double canoes, far superior to their own.[68] They also visited Mbua for sandalwood,[69] which they used to perfume their oil, and Taveuni for red paroquet[70] feathers, which they traded to Samoa for decorating fine mats.[71] They gave in return Tongan articles such as whales' teeth, barkcloth, and inlaid clubs. They also paid in services, such as the loan of their women and help in warfare.[72] Since the art of warfare was more highly developed in Fiji than in Tonga, young Tongan noblemen often spent a few years in the service of Fijian chiefs in order to learn it.[73] In return for services in warfare the Tongan warriors were given land occasionally, and colonies of Tongans grew up in Lau, Vanua Levu, and the islands of the Koro Sea.[74]

[62] Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 62; Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 457 footnote; Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 3. [63] Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 272. [64] Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, pp. 61–65.

[65] The voyage to Tonga took two to four days (Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 3). [66] Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

[67] The Tongans were more daring sailors than the Lauans, who seldom ventured with their canoes out of sight of land. However, they did accompany the Tongans to Tonga occasionally (William Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, 2nd ed., London, 1818, Vol. 2, pp. 263–64). Cook met Fijians at Tongatabu on his third voyage (Henderson, *op. cit.*, p. 112).

[68] Wilkes, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 167; Seemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 239–40; Mariner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 265. The Tongans learned a great deal about canoe building from the Lauans (*ibid.*, Vol. Vol. 2, p. 263). [69] Yasi (*Santalum yasi* Seem.).

[70] Kula (*Coriphilus solitarius* Latham), Seemann, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[71] Samoan fine mats and kilts were ornamented with red paroquet feathers usually obtained from Fiji (T. R. Hiroa, *Samoan Material Culture*, Bulletin, Bishop Museum, No. 75, 1930, pp. 256, 281).

[72] Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 45, 94; Seemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 240, 241.

[73] Mariner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 66–70, 307.

[74] Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 45. The greatest migration of Tongans was to Lakemba and the neighboring islands (*ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 4–5). Calvert states that Lakemba

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By the middle of the nineteenth century the Tongans in Fiji had grown unruly, and as a result of many complaints against them, King George of Tonga sent the Tongan chief, Maafu,[75] to govern them. Maafu organized a band of Tongan warriors and became powerful in the chiefdom of Lakemba. He secured the support of the missionaries by promising that conquered groups would be required to become Christian. Traders also helped him by extending credit to be repaid by the conquered in coconut oil, bêche-de-mer, and tortoise shell.[76] He was first to use canon on canoes in Fiji.[77] By the clever policy[78] of aiding the weaker side in a struggle between two Fijian groups and using the victory thus gained for his own ends, he succeeded in gaining control of Lau, the Koro Sea, and most of Vanua Levu. He seriously threatened the supremacy of Mbau, and as a last resort Thakombau,[79] the high chief of Mbau, applied to Great Britain for help. The conquest of Fiji by the Tongans was averted when the group became a British Crown Colony in 1874.[80]

Tongan influence in Fiji reached a peak just before British annexation. Its effect upon the culture was weakened by the growth of western influence so that it was never thoroughly assimilated. It was strongest in Lau, especially on Lakemba, the residence of the chief. The Lauans are

had three Tongan settlements (*ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 15). Informants on Kambara said that a Tongan settlement was located at Naimarai on the beach near Vunisinu between Ndaku and Nggalinggali. Here they built their double canoes from Kambaran wood. The hull was placed over a trench dug in the ground. The workers stood in the trench, which was examined. For other Tongan settlements in Fiji see G. C. Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians, 1835–1856* (Sydney, 1931), p. 51.

[75] Concerning Maafu see Seeman, *op. cit.*, pp. 241–55; Basil Thomson, *The Fijians* (London, 1908), p. 53.

[76] Seeman, *op. cit.*, p. 252. [77] Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 53 footnote.

[78] First used at Lomaloma, Vanua Mbalavu, a large island in northern Lau (Seemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–43).

[79] Thakombau was not only troubled by the Tongans but also blamed for outrages against life and property of American citizens, for which the United States demanded $45,000 indemnity. In 1858 Thakombau negotiated with the British consul in Fiji for cession of Fiji to Great Britain with 200,000 acres of land on condition that the debt to America be paid (Seemann, *op. cit.*, p. 246). The end of the war between the Fijians and the Tongans really came in 1861, however, when Commodore Seymour drew up an agreement between the chiefs concerning Mathuata (Vanua Levu) in order to protect the bêche-de-mer trade (*ibid.*, pp. 269–73).

[80] Smythe, sent by Great Britain to investigate the annexation question, recommended acceptance of Fiji for three reasons: (1) as a station for mail lines; (2) as a potential cotton source; (3) as a means of acquiring security in the Pacific (Mrs W. J. Smythe, *Ten Months in Fiji*, 1864, p. 205). Thakombau was given a pension of £1500 per year. He died in 1882 (Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 55).

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175 taller than the inhabitants of the rest of Fiji. They have markedly lighter skins, less negroid features, and many individuals have wavy hair.[81]

The main influence of the Tongans on Lauan culture[82] has been in the social life and in technology. The Tongan concept of divine chieftainship and rank, expressed in social ceremonial, elaborated that of the Lauans. The whale's tooth won exceptional significance.[83] It became the object of greatest ceremonial and economic value in Lau, a means by which wealth could be condensed, exchanged, and preserved, a symbol of social prestige.[84]

Women, especially those of rank, began to play a role in social life. The rank of a chief was reckoned no longer exclusively through his father, but also through his mother.[85] Women participated not only in the ceremonial preparation and serving of the kava root, but also in drinking it.[86] The chastity of girls of rank was emphasized, and chiefs' daughters were

[81] Tongan mixture alone, however, does not seem to account for the strong Polynesian strain in Lau, most apparent in the chief group. Even today members of the land group are usually smaller, darker, more frizzy-haired and coarser featured than the descendants of the immigrants. This is most striking on islands such as Fulanga where the population is composed largely of land people.

[82] Less canibalism, widow strangling, and burying alive were found in Lau than in Fiji proper. Henderson (*op. cit.*, 1931, p. 32) attributes this fact to Tongan influence.

[83] Jackson, who was two years in Fiji about 1840 and who learned the language, said he was always told that the tambua ndamu (red whales' teeth) were introduced to Fiji by Tongans. They were substituted for yanggona (kava) in ceremonies and called tambua, as kava had previously been called when presented ceremonially. Jackson estimated that there were twenty times as many white as red whales' teeth in Fiji. Frequent oiling and handling turned the teeth red. Whales' teeth, especially red ones, held the highest value in ceremonial exchange, and life and death depended upon them (Erskine, *op. cit.*, p. 439). Also Williams and Calvert (*op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 94; Vol. 2, p. 5) state that the Tongans brought whales' teeth to Fiji. Hocart (Man, No. 96, 1914) states that a whale's tooth is called kava in the tauvu presentation ceremony of the Dhakaundrove, Vanua Levu, and evidently kava formerly was the offering.

[84] Mariner (*op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 302) states that it was dangerous for a man other than a chief to possess a whale's tooth, but this is not true today.

[85] Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 32.

[86] Hocart states that the Fijian mode of ceremonial kava drinking at state occasions was discontinued under the rule of Maafu (who died in 1881) but it was restored later under the fourth Lord of Naiau (*op. cit.*, 1929, p. 63). The Tongan method is less formal than the Fijian. In the former the kava root was formerly chewed by youths (Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 141). A four-legged Tongan type of bowl is used. There is less hand clapping and no kava mekes are sung. In Lakemba the Tongan method, described by Hocart (*op. cit.*, 1929, pp. 60–63), is used on important occasions. The Fijian kava ceremony is used in the wading ceremony and at the installation of chiefs (*ibid.*, p. 63). In southern Lau the modified Fijian ceremony is used on all formal occasions. Since chewing has been forbidden by the colonial government, the root is either pounded with a stone hammer on a flat slab or with an iron bar pestle in a wooden mortar.

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isolated, fattened, and forbidden the sin in preparation for marriage.[87] Perhaps it is also through Tongan influence that Lauan women do not work in the fields, whereas in other parts of Fiji they are responsible for a large part of the gardening.

The legend of Mburotu, an island paradise or land of the dead, located under the sea and filled with beautiful women, probably also came into Lau from Tonga. It is an exotic belief, unrelated to the beliefs of either the early inhabitants or the immigrants, but similar to a concept found in Tonga and other neighboring parts of Polynesia.[88]

Tongan carpenters,[89] sent to Lau to build canoes, had a marked effect on Lauan technology. Not only did the canoe and all woodcrafts gain in importance, but the oval Tongan house was introduced and pushed out the old Lauan form.[90] The oval house was raised on an earth mound and the height of the mound reflected the rank of the owner.[91] With the increased importance of woodcrafts, the prestige of professional carpenters was enhanced.

Another Lauan technic greatly influenced by the Tongans was tapa making. The Tongan rubbing method[92] was introduced and combined with the Fijian stencil method.[93] The women of Mothe and Namuka formed

[87] A custom still practised on Kandavu Island.

[88] Mariner, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 99, 101–102; E. W. Gifford, *Tongan Myths and Tales* (Bulletin, Bishop Museum, No. 8, Honolulu, 1924), pp. 153–80.

[89] During Period 2 a group of carpenter sibs called Matai Sau monopolized the carpentry craft. According to the Lauan lore, the founder of this group, Rokola, came from northeast Viti Levu to Lau before Ndaunisai. Rokola is known in Viti Levu as the god of the carpenters (Brewster, *op. cit.*, p. 249). Each chief had a number of the Matai Sau attached to his retinue, but gradually the chiefs began to employ Tongan carpenters, who competed seriously with the Lauan group. Finally a group of carpenters called Matai Lemaki became established as the high chief's carpenters. This group traces its pedigree to Lemaki who, according to his descendants, came from Samoa through Tonga to Lakemba.

[90] The change was in process when Bligh saw Ngau Island in the Koro Sea west of Lau, on his second voyage (Henderson, *op. cit.*, 1933, p. 164).

[91] Today the height of the house mound depends not only on rank but also on wealth and energy.

[92] Used to make ngatu vaka Tonga (Tongan tapa). Strips of barkcloth, up to about seventy-five meters long, are rubbed with Lauan rust-brown dyes over raised geometric or naturalistic designs called kupetchi. Some of the kupetchi now being used were made in Tonga. Others were made on Lakemba, Ono, and Vanua Mbalavu (islands where Tongan influence has been strong). They are rare and highly valued.

[93] The result is called ngatu vaka vitchi (Fijian tapa). A large, rectangular sheet of fine tapa is decorated, partly by the Tongan rubbing method, partly by the Fijian stencil method. Geometric design units are used for stenciling. Only a few women know how to make ngatu vaka vitchi, which calls for originality and is the most valued tapa in Fiji. It is made well on Matuku and Lakemba (see Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, pp. 65–67).

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175 guilds, according to the Tongan pattern, in order to supply the demand for Lauan barkcloth. Quite likely the naturalistic designs found in Lau and not in Fiji proper are the result of influence from Tonga, where naturalistic designs prevail.

The Tongan chiefs stimulated the production of perfumed oil by exacting large quantities as tribute from the southern islands.[94] To meet the demand, coconut plantations were systematically planted and these served later as a basis for the copra trade.

Turning to European influence, we find that the Tongans were used as a wedge into Fijian culture by the English Wesleyan Methodist missionaries.[95] They came to Lau from their mission center in Tonga and established their first Fijian mission on Lakemba in 1835. They brought Tongan teachers with them[96] and for some time their only converts in Fiji were Tongans.[97] During the first fifteen years the Lakemba mission made slow headway along the Lauans, but finally in 1849 the high chief of Lau was converted[98] and the gospel was soon established on the southern islands. Chapels in charge of native missionaries were built on each island and Sunday was introduced as a day of rest, prayer, and feasts. From the beginning the missionaries waged a death struggle against the houses of the gods, hereditary priesthood, cannibalism, human sacrifice, widow strangling, infanticide, cave burial, and the tattooing of women.[99] In this undertaking they were aided by the colonial government. Warfare soon ceased in the group. The people were forbidden to live in hamlets in the interior of the islands and they moved to new villages along the coast.

Christianity had a great influence on the religio-magic world of the natives. In opposition to the Christian God, the native dieties were said to be devils and the word tevoro (devil) was introduced to the culture.[100] So Christianity compensated for the loss of a hierarchy of old gods with a hierarchy of new devils. For some time the ancestral gods were eclipsed by the Christian God who, because of the white man's power, appeared

[94] Southern Lau is known for its perfumed coconut oil, prized also in Tonga. To cope with the increased production, large wooden bowls called papasia were used. A few of these may still be seen in Lau.

[95] Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 5–8; Henderson, *op. cit.*, 1931, p. 32.

[96] Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 12. Six years before the arrival of the first missionaries two Tahitian teachers were sent from Tonga to Lakemba. They were persecuted there and later settled on Oneate (*ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 9 footnote).

[97] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, pp. 10–12. [98] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 138.

[99] The missionaries, however, tried to uphold the system of chiefly tribute (*ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 75). [100] Hocart, *op. cit.*, 1929, p. 185.

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to have more mana. But the old gods were still feared and secretly propitiated, and the natives were tormented by a conflict of loyalties. Gradually, as the natives adapted western ideas to their own, lotu (the gospel taught by the missionaries) tended to become a formality marked by a feast every seventh day and important mainly for its social value. 175

The immediate result of mission influence, however, was the undermining of the ancestor cult, the basis of the social system. In spite of the efforts of the government and the mission to uphold it, the institution of chieftainship was weakened. Its inner structure depended on the ancestor cult and its outer form was determined by the rank system. Although the government officials tried to appoint local chiefs as their representatives, personality as well as rank had to be considered. The result was to split the authority formerly held exclusively by the chiefs between the chiefs, native government officials, and native missionaries. So there arose a secret society called luve ni wai, which was forbidden by the government. The members of this organization secured a guardian spirit with whose help they predicted the future, discovered new medicines, and originated new dance forms. Many individuals tried in this way to regain their lost prestige.

Under British rule the Mbauan dialect became the official language. Missionaries and officials used it in communicating with the natives, so that today we find spoken in Lau a mixture of the Lauan and Mbauan dialects with a few additional Tongan words.[101] In time schools were started on most islands under native masters, who taught the children to read and write Mbauan. Teachers were trained not only in mission schools but also in a recently established government training school on Viti Levu. An attempt was made to introduce a few simple methods of hygiene, particularly regarding child birth and care.

Western influence, beginning with warfare and religion and working through the social system, finally reached a peak through the economic life. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century copra became an important export product of the Fiji group. As the industry grew, the coconut acreage was increased and the Lauan plantations, which had supplied tribute to the Tongan chief, began to be used commercially. In exchange for copra the Lauans received tobacco,[102] cloth, soap, tinned beef,

[101] Hocart (*op. cit.*, p. 231) has pointed out that Polynesian words which are distinctly non-Tongan occur in the Lauan dialect. These words may be due to contact with the immigrants from the west in Period 2, but the point cannot be determined without examination of the linguistic evidence.

[102] Tobacco smoking was introduced at the beginning of the nineteenth century (Williams and Calvert, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 161).

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175 rice, tea, and oil. As they acquired a taste for European trade goods, they began to neglect their other economic pursuits such as fishing, gardening, canoe building, and interisland trade. Men, women, and children worked on the plantations belonging to their sibs. There followed a period of prosperity which lasted until the copra slump after the World War.

Then the copra trade in Lau ended abruptly. Communication with the outside world was cut, and the natives found themselves no longer in a position to secure many trade goods upon which they had become dependent.

PERIOD 5

A new period began. Neglected gardens were cleared and replanted, native crafts began to flourish, trade between the islands revived, and the whole daily routine resembled olden days. The hereditary master fisherman, whose title is determined by rank, regained control of the communal fishing. The first fruits of the harvest were again presented, but now to the old chief and the native colonial official jointly,[103] while in the first and second periods they had been offered to the gods and in the third to the chiefs. Large, single sailing canoes, with improved rigging due to western influence, have replaced the cutter but the double canoe has disappeared. Wooden bowls are made in large quantities but with less skill than in olden days. The tapa and mat making industries are again flourishing and native rope, fish lines, and fish nets are replacing imported articles.

Now the natives have regained most of their old economic independence. A few articles are still imported. Metal axes and bush knives have become quite indispensable, and it would be very difficult for the Lauans to give up trade cloth and cooking pots. Today axes, bush knives, cooking pots, and trade cloth form practically the only economic ties which link southern Lau with the outside world.

British political control is being adjusted more and more to the old order, high ranking families are receiving more attention, and a new pattern of social values is in process of formation.

As far as religion is concerned, the outer forms of Christianity have been incorporated into the native ceremonial life, but the inner conflict, caused by the weakening of the ancestor cult, has not yet been satisfactorily solved. This conflict tends to sap vitality from the culture. It is to a great extent responsible for the restlessness of the natives, in spite of their growing economic and social stability.

Reviewing the culture history of Lau we find:

178 The first great merging was of a simple, indigenous Melanesian type of culture with a highly organized, intrusive Micronesian-Polynesian

[103] Witnessed in Tokalau, Kambara.

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type.[104] The intrusion consisted of one movement (probably extending over a relatively short period of time) and was carried by a group of immigrants from the west, who settled permanently in Lau. The process of adaptation of the two cultures was relatively undisturbed for several generations. The organization pattern of the immigrants gradually affected nearly every phase of the indigenous culture and in time the typical Lauan configuration emerged. The two cultures were sufficiently similar so that a fusion, based on common traits, could take place and sufficiently different so that the result was a new configuration. With the blending of the intrusive culture with the indigenous one, the essential outlines of Lauan culture were set.

The next strong influence in Lauan culture came from Tonga in the east. Tongan elements were introduced into Lau by individuals or by small groups of traders, carpenters, adventurers, and warriors, many of whom later returned to Tonga. The two cultures, namely, the strongly Polynesianized Lauan and the adjacent Polynesian Tongan, were of the same general type, and the result of contact was an elaboration of the social ceremonial and technology of Lau. Tongan influence was checked by European penetration before it had been thoroughly assimilated; it affected the outer form but not the inner constellation of Lauan culture.

The last great intrusion of exotic elements into Lau, namely European civilization, was brought by missionaries, political officers, and traders. Contact with such a totally dissimilar culture weakened the inner structure of the Lauan configuration. For this the new religion was especially responsible. Changes appeared first in the religious, then the social, and finally the economic life. The cultural equilibrium was seriously disturbed but a breakdown was averted by the sudden isolation of the islands resulting from a change in economic conditions in Europe and America. This forced the natives back to economic independence and allowed the culture time for readjustment toward the creation of a new balance.

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[104] Hocart (Man, No. 43, 1915) states that the island of Viti Levu may be divided by a natural barrier of mountains into two culture areas, the western and the eastern. In the western area he found a culture which he briefly characterizes by the following traits: simple social organization, petty chiefs, the Nanga secret society, the square house, the favorite number 5, and barkcloth made in the interior by men. This culture he calls Low Fijian. In the eastern area he found what he calls the High Fijian culture. It is characterized by elaborate social organization, great sacred chiefs, the oblong house, the favorite number 4, barkcloth made by women on the coast, and canoes. This two-fold, geographical picture of the culture of Viti Levu corresponds in general to the historical picture of the first two periods in Lau.

[pp 198-end, not processed]